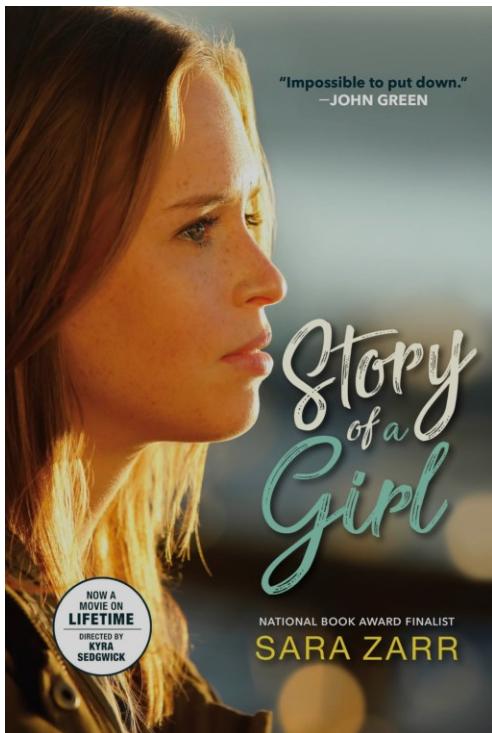


# STORY OF A GIRL



*Young Adult*

**By Sara Zarr**

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**Minor Restricted**  
BookLooks Review Rating

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1	<p>I was thirteen when my dad caught me with Tommy Webber in the back of Tommy's Buick, parked next to the old Chart House down in Montara at eleven o'clock on a Tuesday night. Tommy was seventeen and the supposed friend of my brother, Darren. I didn't love him. I'm not sure I even liked him.</p> <p>The car was cold and Tommy was stoned and we'd been there doing pretty much the same thing a dozen times before, and I could smell the salt air from the beach, and in my head I wrote the story of a girl who surfed the cold green ocean, when one day she started paddling in the wrong direction and didn't know it until she looked back and couldn't see the shore.</p> <p>In my head I wrote the story, while Tommy did his thing, one hand wrapped around my ponytail.</p>
4	<p>"You look hot today, Lambert."</p> <p>"Yeah." Tucker Bradford, flabby and red faced, came close and said, "I think your boobs got bigger this year."</p>
5	<p>But my story had the honor of holding the top spot for over two years running. I mean, a senior getting caught with his pants down on top of an eighth-grade girl, by the girl's father ("No way! Her father? I'd just kill myself!") was pretty hard to beat. That story had been told in hallways and locker rooms and parties and the back of classrooms since Tommy first came to school the morning after it happened.</p>
6	<p>"Why do you front, Lambert? Why pretend you're not a skank when you know you are?" He gestured to himself and the guys around him, "We know you are. You know you are. And, um, your Dad knows you are, so . . ."</p>
7	<p>One of Tucker's friends said, "Come on, man, we don't have time for this shit. We promised Max we'd have the keg there by four."</p> <p>"Yeah," said Tucker, "my brother only works at Fast Mart for like ten more minutes. After that, we're gonna get carded."</p>
17	<p>"Deanna Lambert is a total nympho. Tommy would be at her house, right, hanging with Darren. As soon as Darren leaves the room, Deanna comes around and tells Tommy all this nasty stuff she wants to do with him. This one time? She told Tommy that she knew where Darren kept his porn magazines and she wanted Tommy to look at them with her. And do all this . . . stuff. Tommy's like, No way, you're too young, I could get arrested, but she begged him and begged him and finally he took her out. I heard that when her dad caught them, it took her forever to get out of the car because she was into getting tied up. What a slut!"</p> <p>"Deanna Lambert is a complete psycho. Tommy liked her at first because he thought she was sweet and cute. Then they started going out and she'd be cutting herself, or all cranked on meth, or coming up with crazy ideas like they should bomb the school or whatever. When he tried to break up with her, she was like, I'm gonna kill myself if you leave me, Tommy! What a nightmare!"</p>
24	<p>"I hope you know how lucky you are that Tommy didn't get you pregnant."</p> <p>I did know. We hardly ever used anything. After Dad caught me, my mom dragged me to the doctor to put me on the pill, and after that we went straight to the drugstore where she bought a box of condoms. She shoved the bag into my hands without a word. She didn't need to worry. I was done with sex for a while and still had the box of condoms in my dresser drawer, unopened.</p>

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37	She kissed him then, running her thumb over his jaw while she let her lips linger. “...What did it feel like, I wondered, to be kissed like that right out in public? Not like some passionate tongue-wrestling thing, just a kiss to declare: We are each other’s. I’d never been kissed like that, not by Tommy or anyone else. No one had declared me his, not for the whole world to see, anyway.
38	My eyes stayed on the fries while they kissed.
42	One of the things Darren and me have in common is that we both let Mom and Dad down. Him because of having a kid so young, not to mention getting busted for pot when he was sixteen and having to go through this whole court thing. And me because, well, no one wants the school slut for a daughter.
47	We didn’t belong in church anyway. It was okay for people like Lee, people who were good and could go and believe in it and pray and not wonder if anyone was listening.
53	We’d get stoned on the beach and mess around. It’s not like he ever called me or took me other places.
54	He took another drag of his smoke and it hit me—something about the way he flicked his ash or the way he was talking to me in hushed tones like a girlfriend—Michael was gay.
55	I remembered exactly how it felt when he wrapped my ponytail around his hand, pulling it back until I got the hint that he wanted me to go down. Come on. He said doing that wasn’t really sex, that I’d still be a virgin. Then after a while, being a virgin somehow didn’t matter so much.
61	Jason was on his bed. I sat on the floor. I imagined my dad watching us on a surveillance camera, staring in surprise as we innocently watched TV instead of making out or snorting coke or piercing each other’s nipples or whatever it was my dad thought I did with my spare time.
76	<p>“It’s about sex, right?”      She nodded, covering her face with her small hands. Her nails were never dirty. “You don’t have to say it so loud.”      ...“He wants to have it and you don’t, right?”      She nodded again, but wouldn’t take her hands off of her face.      ...“If you don’t want to, then don’t,” I said. “It’s not like Jason is going to date-rape you or something.”</p>
78	It wasn’t fair, Lee getting to think about losing her virginity with a nice guy like Jason, someone who spent his last two bucks on her favorite cookie, someone who didn’t get her stoned so he could feel her up, someone who didn’t drive her to deserted parking lots without at least taking her out to a movie first. Someone who made a declaration for her, and not just in the backseat of a car.
81	“Girls’ night, you know? We never do that. Drinks and jukeboxes and acting stupid, right? You’re not a kid anymore,” she said, getting more excited, “we could get you a fake ID, easy. I could call Kyle Peterson . . .”
87	I don’t know how Darren turned so dumb all of a sudden, but he just kind of slipped off his Safeway jacket and said, “That looks great, babe! I’ve always wanted to kiss a hot redhead.”
90	When I’m thirty-five years old picking up tampons and a loaf of bread at the store and I run into Jolene Hancock in the express line, she’ll look at me and when she gets home she’ll tell

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	her husband, "I saw Deanna Lambert at the store. She's this girl I knew in high school. Kind of skanky. Slept with this gross junior when she was only thirteen."
94	<p>"Hey, let's have a little smoke while we're at it." He pulled a joint out of his pocket and lit it while steering with his elbows.</p> <p>...Being in Tommy's car with the pot smoke and the damp night air triggered a rush of memories, stuff I hadn't thought about in a long time. Like our first "date," about a week after that day in the bathroom.</p> <p>...We drove down the coast that night and parked in the lot at Montara Beach, where Tommy lit a joint.</p> <p>..."You have no idea what goes on in junior high, do you," I said, taking the joint from him.</p> <p>...He watched me take a hit. My friend at the time, Melony Fletcher, was sort of a pot head and I'd smoked a little with her.</p> <p>...We smoked and listened to the radio and then Tommy moved the bench seat back, put his long arm behind me, and said, "Come here." It was like I was watching myself slide over toward him, watching myself let him pull me onto his lap while I laughed and laughed, goofy from the pot.</p> <p>...Their boyfriends were just guys they made out with after school while their parents were at work. Some of them were having sex—including Melony, with Mitch Benedict.</p> <p>...Not like me. Those words rang in my head, bouncing around with the pot and the dizziness of being alone with Tommy, in his car, a boy—a man—telling me I had something other girls didn't.</p> <p>..."I agree." But he still wouldn't kiss me; he just stared at me and squeezed my hip and smiled until finally I kissed him. He liked to remind me about that all during the next months when I would say we should stop doing what we were doing. "Hey," he'd say, "you started it, remember?"</p> <p>So we made out that night and never did get ice cream, me trying to keep the game going because it was the only thing in my life that felt any good.</p>
104	And I said I was sorry again after he got the job at the auto parts store and overheard his twenty-year-old manager telling a sixteen-year-old employee one of the versions of me, a variation of the nympho version: Yeah, that's Deanna Lambert's dad, you know, the one who got in a fight with Tommy Webber because he found them, right? Him and Deanna, that skanky eighth grader, going at it and she was loving it, you know, and then her dad shows up, and that's him, working in the parts department.
123	"You want to fire one up?" Tommy asked, digging in his pocket for a joint.
124	<p>I slid over to him on the bench seat of the car and he kissed me. It was like a first kiss, shy and short, not a kiss I expected from someone I'd made out with a hundred times before. We kissed some more and it didn't take long for that shyness to wear off, and soon we were back to where we'd left off all those years ago and I let his hands go wherever. I don't remember now how it felt. I wanted it to feel good. I wanted it to feel something. I wanted to remember what it had been like when I was thirteen, if I could figure out why I'd gone along with Tommy and everything he said and did. Was it only because he happened to be the one who came along when he did? Could it have been anyone? Or was there something about him, Tommy Webber, that I liked and cared about? There in the Buick with the fog all around us, I tried to connect with my thirteen-year-old self, remember what she felt like, what she wanted.</p> <p>We kept making out and Tommy took my Picasso's shirt off. We both smelled like pizza. He</p>

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	<p>reached down the side of the bench seat and slid it back, then there was the old thing—the soft but steady pressure on my shoulder with one hand, the other gently pulling on my hair. The first time he did that I was confused, not sure what he wanted. But I wasn't completely stupid and I'd heard about it from Melony, and, I mean, I guess it's just human instinct to sort of figure it out. I remember that first time I didn't want to do it, really, I just wanted to keep kissing and stuff like we had been. But I was stoned and it seemed like a reasonable alternative to going all the way and I didn't want him to get mad at me. I didn't want it all to stop.</p> <p>"Come on, Dee Dee," he said now.</p> <p>I pushed against his hand and sat up. "Can't you just..." I didn't know what I wanted to say.</p> <p>"I don't want to right now."</p> <p>"Yeah, you do. Come on. Please? You used to love doing that."</p> <p>... "What's wrong?"</p> <p>"I didn't used to love doing that," I said.</p> <p>"Okay." He smiled. "But I liked it when you did that, and I know I made you feel good, too. I know that. I always gave as good as I got." "I didn't say it didn't feel good . . ." They never tell you this part in sex ed, how to talk about what you did and why you did it and what you thought about it, before, during, and after.</p> <p>"Then what are you talking about?" He folded his arms on the roof of the car and leaned on them. "What's the problem?"</p> <p>"The problem," I started. "Just...the whole thing..."</p> <p>... "What? What did I do?"</p> <p>"God, Tommy! I was thirteen!" He watched me cry some more. "Can't you say anything?" I asked. "I'd never even gone on a date. I still haven't."</p> <p>"And that's my fault?"</p> <p>"You were seventeen. Supposedly Darren's best friend." I wiped my arm across my face, trying to calm down. "You know I could have pressed charges? There are laws."</p> <p>"But you didn't."</p> <p>"I know. That's not...What if you had a little sister," I said, "and Darren did all that shit to her you did to me?"</p> <p>"Did to you? What's that supposed to mean?" He seemed sincerely confused. "Are you saying I, like, raped you? Because if you're saying that . . ."</p> <p>"No. No, I — you never even took me out. We never went to a movie. We never just hung out and watched TV." We never held hands, we never went for a walk, we never went out for anything to eat. The longer the list got in my head, the more pathetic I felt. The more I felt hurt, the more I felt angry, the more I felt everything. "What was I to you, Tommy? What did you think of me?"</p> <p>"What did I think of you? I liked you, didn't I? I thought you were cute. I thought you were a turn-on."</p> <p>"You thought I was an easy target, is what you thought. Right?"</p>
128	The ride felt fast and familiar, like the times he'd be hurrying to get me home, the windows down to get the smell of pot out of the car.
132	I surfed through the talk shows and pictured my dad on the screen. Today's topic: My Daughter Is a Slut.
139	Suddenly Bruce's voice was right in my ear, whispering, "I guess this is a self-serve thing," and he put his hand between my legs from behind.

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142	"Obviously I've wondered that. Guys wonder what it would be like to kiss every girl. Including their teachers."
145	And even though I knew that's not what he wanted, I kissed him. I put my arms around his neck and leaned into him with my whole body and kissed him. He hesitated, but only for a second, and kissed me back. It was just like I'd imagined, him pulling me closer and resting his hands on my hips, warmth spreading out from my belly.
170	I thought about the way he'd held me when I kissed him, how he'd pulled me closer, kissed back.
182	"Okay, my best friend kissed my little sister," he said. "But it's different. Me and Tommy were drug buddies. You and Lee and Jason, you're for real."

Profanity	Count
Ass	24
Bitch	2
Fuck	7
Goddammit	1
Piss	8
Prick	1
Shit	31